

ZOOLOGY

Bats of British Columbia. Second Edition

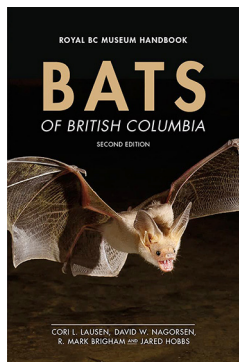
By Cori L. Lausen, David W. Nagorsen, R. Mark Brigham, and Jared Hobbs. 2022. Royal BC Museum. 384 pages, 34.95 CAD, Paper.

Go ahead, judge this book by its cover; it has a very cool nocturnal (of course) shot of a flying bat, mouth agape, presumably emitting one of its calls or about to capture an insect. The teeth are awesome, the blood vessels of the wings stand out, and those ears! I want to credit the photographer, I want to tell you what kind of bat it is, but I can't; there is no information on either.

This is just one of the very few (very, very few) minor annoyances in this otherwise fantastic book.

The second edition of *Bats of British Columbia* greatly expands on the first (published in 1993); the page count alone has doubled. The photographs are typically great (not just good) quality, which is surprising given the nocturnal settings of the vast majority of these shots. Technological advances since the first edition was published have allowed amateur naturalists to contribute to the second edition. These advances include photography equipment that now lets the untrained take the kinds of photos once regarded as only attainable by professionals. Where visual contact is not possible for species-level identification, amateurs now also have access to small, lightweight sound-recording equipment that plugs into their cell phones.

Like many other books of its kind, *Bats of British Columbia* starts with introductory material about the 18 different species of bats found in the province. These 18 species include three accidentals (e.g., Brazilian Free-tailed Bat) and 15 natives (e.g., Hoary and



Pallid Bats). The scope of the introduction is broad, from anatomy and echolocation to roosting sites and threats (including, thankfully, a mention of free-roaming cats, which take a toll not just on birds, but bats as well). A very detailed, photographically-enhanced chapter on in-hand identification ends with a similarly photographically-enhanced key. And on the topic of keys, the section on acoustics terminates with a key, and there is a key to skulls in one of the appendices. There is also a glossary.

The remainder of the book is made up of species accounts. At about 10 pages each, they are quite thorough. Included in each account are detailed photographs, sonograms, a table of measurements, and text covering much of the species' biology. A distribution map is included that plots the different record types (voucher, acoustic, visual) amalgamated for this book, and it shows known and suspected ranges for each species. In the text accompanying the map, reference is often made to communities in British Columbia. However, these aren't marked on the map, so they are rather meaningless to the reader unless an atlas is opened alongside it. This, I believe, is one of the book's very few shortcomings.

Over 300 works were used to compile *Bats of British Columbia*, and there are 22 pages of references for anyone who wants to find out more information on the subject matter. Overall, *Bats of British Columbia* is an awesome resource for both dedicated bat enthusiasts and broad-scope naturalists. I suspect it will become the standard by which similar books are measured.

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